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NUTRITION
IN
GENERAL FUNCTIONAL NEURATROPHIA.

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Neuratrophia is a condition of the nervous system, which we recognize, not only in the functional expression of neurasthenia, but it is an underlying or sequence factor in all diseases of a generally debilitating character. It is the neural *substratum* of functional disorders.

A neuratrophia of that portion of the nervous system concerned in the reparative and reconstructive processes is, at least, one of the basic neural conditions in diseases of debility, whether we recognize a trophic nervous system proper, or whether we attribute all asthenic conditions to a defective state of the vasomotor system and the blood of the vessels. A neuratrophia, in either view, either preceeds or follows the cachæmic or anæmic state.



No therapy that ignores reconstruction of tissue as an essential therapeutic measure, not leaving adequate nourishment to the chance of the patient being fed sufficiently of proper food, can be certainly or as speedily successful as that which recognizes or prescribes a systematic and certainly assimilable nutrition. No state of neurasthenia can exist either as a disease, *sui generis*, or through organic implication of the vascular, lymphatic or osseous systems, or through involvement of the great viscera and secondary implication of the nervous system, in which to feed well of unirritating and assimilable food is contraindicated, but it is essential that alimentation must in many physical morbid conditions be of an unirritating and readily assimilable form. The necessity of nutrition in disease instead of an abstemious diet, should be universally recognized by practitioners; for a sick man has more need of nourishment while disease is wasting him and irritating his nervous system, so as to call for greater repair and consequent stamina to withstand the assaults of disease, than a man that is well and has only to supply repair to compensate daily physiological disintegration. In former times when food was cruder and aliment had to be digested in the system of the sick patient before it could be used to supply the reparative demand of the wasting economy, abstemiousness could be more rationally prescribed in order to avoid the systemic irritation of imperfect efforts at digestion. But now when digested

Nutrition in disease.

aliment is already made, when peptones, peptonoids, and the pancreatic and gastric juices are supplied to the physician's hand, and when, best of all, the purest Extract of Malt can be administered, making the patient's adequate nutrition an assured matter, there is no excuse for the starvation plan of treating diseases, and it will go the way of that other medical mistake of the past, viz.: the withholding of fluids from the heated blood in fevers.

Neuratrophia is not only a disease of debility, but it is the accompaniment of all wasting diseases, and for this condition the Extract of Malt is always indicated, being itself nutritious and reconstructive, while at the same time it promotes digestion of the starchy element of such food as it may find in the alimentary canal. So that the prescribing of some good plain malt, preferably, in my opinion, the malt of Trommer, has become a routine practice with me, not a therapeutic hobby, but a rational therapeutic precept, based upon physiological, pathological and chemical consideration, because it is

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desirable to maintain, so far as the powers of assimilation remaining to one's patients will permit a satisfactory state of nutrition; for if we fail in nourishing our patient adequately other medication is vain. This indication the pure Extract of Malt fills better than any one article in our reconstructive armamentarium, and to it may be added such other reconstructives of tissue, neural and hæmic tonics, as may be indicated in the

judgment of the physician, such as the hypophosphites, strychnia, arsenic, iron, etc., and in such proportions as symptoms at the time suggest to the prescriber. Certain proprietary establishments have of late undertaken to manufacture prescriptions ready made for the physician, but inasmuch as the proportions of the other agencies besides the malt should vary in the judgment of medical men for different cases, the medical adviser had better prescribe these additions. My rule has been and is to make my own compound, prescribing the plain Extract of Malt as a vehicle, in certain cases but more often using Trommer's plain Extract uncombined.

No person is made worse by Malt Extract, no matter what his ailment may be, not excepting diabetes mellitus, for it is not the surplus sugar in the system that is here at fault, and the satisfaction which a course of Malt Extract has so often given me in the management of all neuratrophic and neuropsychic states, has led me to adopt the plan, whatever else I prescribe, of directing pure, plain Malt Extract on the patient's table, to be taken *ad libitum* within certain reasonable limits, at each meal. If nutrition of this certain kind is prescribed, and not left to the patient's discretion, we may be assured, at least, that he will be reasonably well nourished pending our effort to eradicate his disease and reconstruct him.